

# HISTORY

## *Mission*

The department of history attempts, first of all, to assist students to understand how the political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual worlds they inhabit came into being and how various forces act to bring about or resist the process of change; second, to prepare majors for future careers in teaching, journalism, management, law and similar occupations which require a broad understanding of the way human beings operate and basic competency in the skills of research and explication that history requires.

The first goal is accomplished by offering a selection of courses that will give depth and breadth to students majoring in a variety of different disciplines; this will make them better informed and more active citizens, and will direct them toward a lifetime of enjoyable reading, study, and travel. The second goal is met by emphasizing a collection of essential skills—finding good sources, evaluating them, organizing information, making effective oral and written presentations, and making fair, accurate, and pertinent evaluations; through personal counselling, to see that students are made aware of materials and methods of study most appropriate to their interests, and of career opportunities best suited to their talents and ambitions; through offering as wide a variety of courses, off-campus experiences, and independent studies as practical which train students in one or more of these essential skills; and lastly, by acting as models of teaching and scholarship, to illustrate through personal example various ways that one uses the skills and techniques of the discipline.

History is by its very nature interdisciplinary. Hence, it has the potential of meeting a greater number of the institutional goals than the average department.

1) The study of History promotes richer personal lives through increased appreciation of travel, reading, and the arts and richer professional lives through emphasis on the historical methods (choosing facts from a seeming chaos of information, analyzing those facts, forming and narrating the story well.

2) Citizenship has always been one of the goals of teaching history, and those of our graduates who become teachers will be expected to pass the information, ideals, and attitudes required for good citizenship on to the next generation.

3) Historians look at the principles of democracy, pluralism, equality and freedom not just in the contemporary context, but across the centuries and beyond the seas.

4) We are interdisciplinary by nature.

5) One cannot study the history of any society without understanding the spiritual aspects of that society.

6) By offering classes in American, European, and World history we provide multiple perspectives on the human condition. We participate regularly and significantly in programs with an international focus. We contribute to staffing the Comparative Societies course.

7) Through directed research and independent studies numerous mentoring opportunities for advanced students prepare them for graduate school.

8) We stress writing and speaking. [ See document A which breaks down the goals of the various courses and guides us toward End Point Assessment. ]

9) The methods of inquiry vary from class to class, as a result of a conscious effort to emphasize some in one course, others in other courses. Some of our courses would be considered humanities, others social science.

## *Assessment of Student Learning in the Major*

1) Copies of syllabi and exams demonstrate what material is covered in the courses, what kind of assignments are required, and what kind of testing is done. This should indicate what the *department's expectations* are. We observe in class the students' ability to *perform* well in upper level courses which require more extensive reading, writing, oral reports, and research.

2) Some of us have collected student papers sent on e-mail and we have talked as a department about collecting more of this kind of information so that we can randomly check our students' writing and organization ability. This gives us some insight as to the effectiveness of our efforts to teach writing skills and use of a-v materials effectively.

3) We have portfolios on majors. For twenty-five years we have been maintaining summary sheets on students' progress, often with faculty comments that can be used for letters of recommendation. When combined with information about students' post-graduate activities and personal contact with the students, these give some idea about whether or not various aspects of the program have successfully met the department goals. Since 1995 we have copies of the senior papers, clippings from students' activities such as the *Oracle*, *Coil*, athletics, plays, and papers given at scholarly gatherings.

4) We have the student results from the state test for teachers. We know our students well enough to extrapolate from the students who take the test to others.

5) We have close personal contact with our honors' students through Phi Alpha Theta and our upper level students through the Hist 400 course. These provide formal and informal opportunities to monitor how well our program is doing.

6) Through our professional activities we exchange ideas and information with colleagues at other institutions about what we should and can be doing, we use the ACM meetings to update our methods of instruction and evaluation, and through the literature (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, for example, or conferences with sessions on how to teach history), we keep abreast with the major topics in educational theory and practice.

7) As a department we discuss the progress of individual students and debate what we as a group can do better within the confines of limited staff, limited offerings, and limited budgets. On the whole we are satisfied that we have the minimal resources for lectures, library, audio-visual, and out-of-class activities.

8) We have been discussing for over a year a senior review course (perhaps one semester hour). That discussion has revealed the technical and practical problems which prevent this approach from having already been instituted widely in higher education. Such a course would be desirable in many ways, but not necessarily as desirable as activities which would have to be sacrificed to staff two sections a year.

## Document A - History Department Student Learning Outcome Objectives

SKILLS and KNOWLEDGE stressed in History course offerings:

- 1 Factual knowledge
- 2 Theoretical knowledge\historiography\critical evaluation
- 3 Many short papers\videos
- 4 Research techniques
- 5 Research paper\project
- 6 Original Research
- 7 Interviews
- 8 Discussion
- 9 Oral presentations\group presentations
- 10 Preparation for state exams\teaching

√√=multiple instructors

COURSE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
101 wc	√√		√√					√√	√	√√
102 wc	√√		√√					√√		√√
105mo			√					√		
110 us	√		√	√	√			√	√	√
111 us	√√	√√	√√	√√				√		√√
112 us	√√	√√	√√	√√				√		√√
200ill	√√		√√		√√				√	√√
202jap	√							√		
206enl	√	√	√					√		
207mo	√	√	√					√		
208ni	√	√	√					√		
209rus	√	√	√					√		
211gr	√	√	√	√					√	
212ro	√	√	√	√				√	√	
222me	√	√		√				√	√	
223re	√	√						√		
235tot	√	√	√					√		√
240as	√		√	√	√				√	

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<b>COURSE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
302midea	√				√			√		
304africa	√		√					√	√	
305mexic	√	√	√					√		
313educ	√	√						√		√
314civwar	√		√	√		√			√	√
315west	√	√	√	√				√	√	
316wwii	√	√	√	√	√			√		√
330biog	√	√	√					√		
340viet	√		√		√			√		√
358fam				√	√	√	√	√	√	
370wom	√	√		√	√	√	√	√		√
400sem		√			√	√	√	√	√	√

### How this can contribute to understanding End Point Assessment Data

It may sound trite to say that we are constantly discussing what we are trying to do, what resources we need to do it better, and thinking together about the problems we encounter. However, as our offices are right together and we are in them many hours each day, that is what we do. Periodically we meet together formally to discuss matters such as this skills chart (which was originally drawn up long before the North Central Report was being thought about) so that we could coordinate the educational effort inside the department.